

INFORMATION REPORT

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The Military Topographic Service

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1. The Topographic Service (Topographicheskaya Sluzhba) was a separate service of the Soviet Army. Its mission was to produce and distribute military maps to the Army. The service was headed by the Chief Military Topographic Administration (Glavnaya Voenno-Topographicheskoye Upravlenie) in Moscow. This was one of the "Upravlenii" directly under the Chief of the Army General Staff. The Chief Military Topographic Administration consisted of approximately 150 officers headed by a general officer. The "Upravleniya" had several "Otdeli" (sections):
 - (a) "Organizatsionno-Operativnyi" - this was the Plans and Operations Section for military mapping of all the USSR. It worked closely in connection with the "Operativnaya Upravleniya" (Operations Administration) of the Army General Staff. It decided which areas needed mapping, at what time, and to what scale. It assigned work to the various "Topographicheskii Otdel Otkrugov" (topographic sections of the military districts).
 - (b) "Otdel Kadrov" - the personnel records section.
 - (c) "Uchebnyi Otdel" or "Otdel Boyevoi Podgotovki" - training section.
 - (d) "Administrativno-Stroyevoye Otdeleniye" - the administrative and personnel section dealing with such matters for this "Upravleniya" only.

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- (e) "Kartographichiski Otdel" - this section checked on the quality of military maps, methods of map making, use of aerial photographs, etc.
- (f) The above listed sections were the most important ones of this "Upravleniya."

2. Under the "Uchebni Otdel," i.e., the training section [see para 1 (c) above] were the various educational programs of the Topographic Service. There was one military school (ushilishe) in Leningrad called the "Voenno-Topographicheskaya Ushilishe," i.e., the Military Topographic School. This institution gave a three-year course and turned out lieutenants of the Topographic Service. After 1923 the only Military Topographic School was the one in Leningrad. It had about 600 students and graduated about 200 each year. There was only one faculty, that of topography. Main subjects were military topography, methods of surveying, and general military subjects, including tactics. A few topographic officers later attended the Geodetics Section (Geodezicheskoye Otdelenie) of the Surveying Faculty (Mezhevoi Fakultet) of the civilian Agricultural Academy (Selsko-Khoziastvinaya Akademiya imeni Timiriazeva) in Moscow. This was also a three-year course and provided advanced topographic training. Incidentally, under the Soviet Council of Ministers, but in practice under the NKVD [MVD], was a civilian High Geodetic Administration (Visheye Geodezicheskaya Upravleniya), which was in charge of civilian mapping for all the USSR. Its functions included the determination of the network of elevation points.

3. Each Soviet military district (voenni okrug) had a Topographic Section (Topographichiski Otdel) [redacted] This type of section had no T/O and E and varied greatly in size from one district to another. In Tashkent, for example, in the 1930's the section numbered about 200 individuals, about 100 officers and about 100 civilians. It was almost as large as the rest of the headquarters staff of the military district. Its numbers varied, however, but despite what I indicated in the previous report, I believe that 200 was the closest approximate total. There were very large topographic sections in frontier military districts; whereas, in the interior USSR, they could be very small. The size of the topographic section, naturally, also varied with the area covered by the military district. The Military Topographic Service was made up only of military personnel. All of its members were male officers. The lowest rank was that of lieutenant [equivalent to 2nd Lt in the US Army]. In practice, the highest rank of the service was that of Colonel-General [equivalent to Lt General in the US Army]. Civilian personnel included draftsmen, many of whom were women, and workers who printed maps. Equipment included surveying instruments and presses for printing maps. However, I believe that some of the small military districts in the interior USSR did not have presses. The large military topographic sections were relatively independent from the military district headquarters. The chief, or "nachalnik," of the Topographic Section reported to the chief of staff of the military district, but was not under the T/O of the district staff and many of his activities were separate. The section also had a separate building and its own "Administrativno-Stroyevaya Chast" (Administrative and Personnel sub-section). It was not under a similar "otdelenie" of the district staff. Some of the smaller Topographic Sections did not have Topographic Detachments (Voenni Topographichiskii Otradi) or presses, but many did have, such as the one in Tashkent. There was no T/O for a Topographic Detachment. It could have 20 or 90 officers and its size could vary yearly, depending upon the amount of work for each year. There was always only one Topographic Detachment under the Topographic Section. However, the detachment divided into smaller "otradi" during the summer, when field work was involved [See [redacted] Of the 100 or less topographic officers in the section, about

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fifteen of them were in the section headquarters. These fifteen officers were the ones who headed and staffed the various "otdelenii" of the section headquarters: "Kartographicheskoye" (mapping); "Organizatsionno-Planovoye" (organization and planning); "Izdatelskoye" (printing); the "Administrativno-Stroitel'noye Chast'" (Administrative and Personnel sub-section); and "Chercheznoye" (drafting). At the most, the Topographic Section in Tashkent had about 80 civilian draftsmen, of whom about half were women, and about 20 printers. As each topographic officer working in the field needs three or four assistants and also may need protection or support if he is working in a desert area, several cavalry platoons were assigned to surveying parties to aid in their work. When extensive surveying for mapping was in progress, separate cavalry companies (topographicheskii eskadroni) were organized.

3. In peace time, one topographic officer was assigned to the Operations Section (Operativnoye Otdeleniye) of the staff of a corps. In war time, this was also true and in addition one topographic officer was assigned to each division staff. In war time, the staff of an army had a topographic section (Topographicheskii Otdel), which was made up of three or four officers. I would like to point out that in war time each military district forms a staff for one army. A smaller district staff also remains.
4. To answer some of the questions in detail in regard to the Military Topographic Service, as I indicated above, there were no enlisted men in the service. An officer to be qualified for and to be assigned to the Topographic Service had to finish the Military Topographic School in Leningrad. In order to enter this school he had to be a graduate of the 10 year school, i.e., high-school. Women were not assigned to the topographic service as the military school did not admit women. A woman's only possible connection with the Military Topographic Service would be for her to work as a civilian draftsman. Once the individual completed the Military Topographic School he did not undergo any further training, with the following two occasional exceptions. Some of the topographic officers later went on to the civilian Geodetic Section of the Surveying Faculty (see above) and became military geodetic experts (voennii geodezisti). Also, some officers were trained in the use of aerial photographs in producing certain types of maps. This training, I believe, took place somewhere in the Crimea. However, aerial photographs were usually utilized only to check existing maps and bring them up to date in regard to any new settlements, bodies of water, etc.
5. In regard to control of topographic units, I have given most of the details on that already in this report. However, I would like to add that the Chief of the Army General Staff each year assigned a general topographic mission to each chief of staff of a military district. Detailed instructions, however, were sent by the Chief Military Topographic Administration in Moscow to the Topographic Section of each military district.
6. In the artillery, there were topographic batteries (topographicheskii baterii). These were not part of the Military Topographic Service. The topographic batteries were to be found in heavy artillery regiments and in "high-powered" artillery regiments (bolshoi moshnisti). At present /1964/, I suppose, they are probably also to be found in guided missile units. These batteries have the mission of calculating long distance artillery fire on existing maps. They also calculate local magnetic declinations. All personnel of these batteries are artillery officers, except for one or two temporarily assigned topographic officers. The latter were so assigned during World War II particularly, as not all artillery officers were well enough qualified for this type of work.

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